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IDEA 2299-65

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13 January 1965

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EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE LOSS OF MISSION C025C, 10 JANUARY 1965

PRE-ALERT

1. On 8 January 1965 at 1400 hours, alert briefing was held in the Control Center attended by Colonel Ledford, Lt.

[REDACTED]  
other D/FA personnel.

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2. Weather conditions and target criteria were discussed for the launch of C015C and the pre-alert weather for a possible mission over Pao Tou. The decision was made to alert a mission for an [REDACTED] over Pao Tou for 10 January 1965.

(TAPE)

3. On 16 December 1964, a requirement was levied on NPIC to make a check of target areas within 50 miles of the targets of Lan Chou and Pao Tou. This check was made, and NPIC reported no SAM sites within this area. This was to satisfy our local requirements for SAM AOB search for [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] C344C. (See Attachment 1).

4. On 7 January 1965, another [REDACTED] was planned to cover Pao Tou from [REDACTED] To further check the SAM Order of Battle in China, a request for [REDACTED]

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IDEA 2299-65  
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5. 9 January 1965. At 1300 hours E., alert weather briefing for possible missions on 12-13 January, along with mission planning weather briefing for Pao Tou mission on 10 January, was held, Present were [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Decision was made at this time not to alert a mission for 12 January due to deteriorating weather in the Koko Nor and Lan Chou areas, and no requirements in the other areas. Weather continued to look favorable for the 10 January 1965 Pao Tou mission. Go-No-Go weather to be presented at 0100 hours E. 10 January.

(TAPE)

6. 10 January 1965. At 0100 hours E., 10 January, Go-No-Go weather for C025C was held, attended by [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Weather was good, AOB discussed, no significant information which would affect a launch. Launch ordered on this basis.

(TAPE)

MISSION PLANNING AND BRIEFING

Messages from [REDACTED] concerning mission planning and briefing were normal with no problems.

(Reference telecon between [REDACTED] and Headquarters 10 Jan 65)

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IDEA 2299-65

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PRE-FLIGHT

25X1 Minor radio and autopilot problems corrected. Take-  
off was on time. [ ] was not ground checked prior  
25X1 to takeoff but checked after takeoff and received two good  
[ ] checks and a third [ ] check at 1300Z  
(a scheduled time; however, this was weak and unreadable to  
monitor station). This pre-takeoff [ ] check is local  
policy and not required by Hqs. [ ]  
This requires A-OK check 20 minutes after takeoff but prior  
to entry over denied territory. This check was made.  
(Reference telecon between [ ] and Hqs. 10 Jan 65)

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ALERT NOTIFICATION

All necessary messages were sent on 8 and 9 January  
notifying all concerned of the alert and Go decision on  
mission C025C. Call-down sheets were followed as required.  
(ATTACHMENT - Alert and notification messages)

COMMUNICATIONS

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1. The SAM Order of Battle for Communist China is maintained in the Intelligence Division of OSA. The maintenance and updating of the SAM Order of Battle is derived from all sources, with NPIC having provided the most accurate up-to-date Order of Battle. Prior to January 1965, the SAM Order of Battle held by OSA was believed to have been as accurate as any in existence. Flight after flight confirmed the accuracy of the Order of Battle and there existed no reason to doubt that it was very accurate. Intelligence checked the Order of Battle constantly, not only with NPIC but with all other sources both in Agency and out.

2. Furthermore, the Intelligence Officer in OSA sits in COMOR as a consultant and can review all requirements considered and passed on in COMOR. Since, obviously, OSA has an urgent need for latest SAM Order of Battle, he insures that all potential targets for the IDEALIST Program include the requirement for SAM Order of Battle for each target of interest. In the event any significant readout does not include SAM Order of Battle, he can request either directly through the COMOR P.W.G. or via the CIA COMOR principal that coverage and SAM readout be obtained. As an example, the requirement for readout in the Pao Tou area reads as follows: "Report changes since most recent coverage and note any additional indications as to function of installation. Report SAM activity within 50 NM of complex".

3. Prior to a mission being launched Intelligence insures that the OAK readout for the last KH mission over the target area has been completed. If it has not, as in the case of the Lanchou Mission C015C, then a special request is levied on NPIC to search the area ASAP before the mission is launched. This has been done in past by secure phone or directly in person with NPIC representative. In future, requirements of this nature will be done in writing or by cable.

4. If there is doubt as to whether NPIC was aware of its role in supporting DDS&T operations, we would like to point out the following:

a. That ordinarily an NPIC representative is present during one or more of the briefings prior to the mission and he is thoroughly familiar with the degree to which OSA Operations relies on NPIC for SAM Order of Battle information.

TOP SECRET

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[REDACTED]

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Page 2  
Attachment #1  
IDEA 2299-65

b. This has been acknowledged in many instances and as an example the following is quoted from a letter from the DDI to the DCI, dated 15 July 1964: "There is a standing requirement on NPIC to report immediately the location of any new SAM, or suspect SAM sites in China. OSI and OCI routinely evaluate any report on any information pertaining to SAM sites in Communist China. A concentrated re-examination of all photography was made following the U-2 loss as assurance that a SAM had not been overlooked."

5. We do not feel that NPIC refuses to acknowledge its role in support of OSA Operations, however, we do feel that there might be some misconception on the part of others as to the existing relationship between OSA and NPIC. The above should help clarify this question.

6. On 16 December 1964 a requirement was levied by telephone on NPIC to make a check of Lanchou and Pao Tou for any new SAM activity. NPIC report was negative. This phone call was made to satisfy our local requirements for SAM Order of Battle search for [REDACTED] Mission C344C, which aborted prior to target coverage.

7. On 7 January 1965 another [REDACTED] mission was planned to cover Pao Tou from [REDACTED] to further check the SAM Order of Battle in China. [REDACTED]

8. In the future NPIC will be asked, via cable, to provide an up-to-date SAM report for each [REDACTED] target to be covered by the IDEALIST vehicle prior to the launch of any mission. In the future a negative report, via cable or in writing, will be in hand prior to execution of the mission.

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